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ABSTRACT

In order to provide women educational researchers with equal opportunities, the author proposes that women's affirmative action plans with respect to educational research be instituted, and that the American Educational Research Association (AERA) play a central role in their institution. What is necessary in a women's affirmative action plan for AERA is a statement of commitment to equal opportunity for women to participate in the association, and this commitment must be detailed through policies covering the main categories of associational activities. To accomplish a complete women's affirmative action plan, a full-time women's affirmative action officer should be appointed. AERA thus has a role to play in instituting women's affirmative action plans for the educational research training and/or research organization to which its members belong. (Author/PC)

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WOMEN IN EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH: AFFIRMATIVE ACTION PLANS

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In order to provide women educational researchers with equal opportunity, I propose that women's affirmative action plans with respect to educational research (1) be instituted and that the American Educational Research Association (AERA) play a central role in their institution.

A women's affirmative action plan with respect to educational research is a policy document that incorporates more than a passive stance of non-discrimination against women who are educational researchers or are in the process of becoming educational researchers. It is a policy document that requires deeds that rectify inequality of educational research opportunity due to discrimination on the basis of female sex. Since women may be discriminated against within AERA as well as within the educational research training and/or research organizations to which AERA's members belong, a women's affirmative action plan for AERA as well as women's affirmative action plans for educational researchers of Indiana University, the San Francisco Unified School District, New York State Department of Education, Educational Testing Service, etc. are required.

Turning first to the women's affirmative action plan for AERA, what is necessary is a statement of commitment to equal opportunity for women to participate in the association. This commitment must be detailed through policies covering the main categories of associational activities: governance, publication, recruitment, and meeting. With respect to governance, appointment to committees and offices and nominations should be treated. The following motion of the AERA Council in 1973, in response to a proposal of the women's caucus that representation should be equal to the number of women members, is an example:

Motion (Ebel/Clifford). It is the sense of the Association Council that Women should be appointed to committees and offices and nominated for elective offices commensurate with the number of women in AERA.

As to publication, policies relative to equal opportunity in editing and publishing as well as policies relative to non-sex bias in the content of publications (2) should be stated. Guidelines, like McGraw-Hill's for their publications, would have to be developed. Policies relative to equal opportunity in the association's recruitment services need statement. The recent open recruitment policy is a beginning. Finally, as to meeting, policies relative to equal opportunity to receive rewards, read papers, etc. should be formulated. A noteworthy step in that direction was taken by the Council in 1973 upon the request of the women's caucus that consideration be given to discontinuing the joint AERA-PDK Award for Distinguishing Contributions to Educational Research because of the discriminating practice of PDK.

Motion (Cronin/Bidwell). It is moved that AERA withdraw from joint sponsorship with Phi Delta Kappa of the annual research award. (Carried, 8 for, 3 against).

In an affirmative action plan it does not suffice to detail commitment, goals and timetables with respect to policies must be projected. Through these projections, good faith is shown in trying to carry out policies. But goals and timetables depend upon a data base. Therein lies the importance of motions, as those of the Council in 1973, which directed the Executive Officer to report annually to the Council "on the number of women in the Association and to provide an analysis of the roles they are playing in various committees" and which instituted a Committee on the Role and Status of Women. The Committee on the Role and Status of Women through the efforts of Jean Lipman-Blumen

and Patricia E. Stivers has secured data on women's participation in AERA. This data could be a basis for projection of goals and timetables for women's participation in AERA.

Two more dimensions must be added to any affirmative action plan, i.e. dissemination and evaluation mechanisms. To insure that policies will not remain inoperative, plans must delineate how others will be involved in carrying them out and how their success or failure will be determined so modification can occur.

To accomplish a complete women's affirmative action plan for AERA, a full time women's affirmative action officer needs to be appointed. Data collection, dissemination, and evaluation are not one-shot or part time affairs. The Committee on the Role and Status of Women can do no more than point AERA in the right direction. To mark off a path for full participation of women in AERA's activities and to stay on that path calls for the firm hand of a women's affirmative action officer. Perhaps it would be worthwhile to have a committee, like the one on the role and status of women, as advisory to that officer.

Turning next to the institution of women's affirmative action plans by educational research training and/or research organizations affliated with AERA through its membership, obviously AERA cannot institute them. But AERA can play a role in their institution.

The women's affirmative action plans for educational research training and/or research organizations affliated with AERA should contain the dimensions of any women's affirmative action plan for educational research: policies

detailing the commitment to equal opportunity for women who are or are becoming educational researchers, goals and timetables supported by data, and dissemination and evaluation mechanisms. The essential difference between a women's affirmative action plan for AERA and such plans for educational research training and/or research organizations affliated with AERA would be the kinds of policies to be detailed.

In Carol Kehr Tittle, Terry N. Saario, and Elinor Denker's study for the Committee on the Role and Status of Women which presents data on women in educational research training and/or research organizations, the following categories of these organizations were sorted out: colleges and universities with doctoral programs in education, school districts, state departments, and research and development organizations. It is patent that programs for training educational researchers would be found in most cases in colleges and universities with doctoral programs. Consequently, colleges and universities should have, in their women's affirmative action plans for educational research, policies detailing equal opportunity for women becoming educational researchers. The facets explored in the Tittle, Saario, and Denker Study indicate the kinds of policy needed: policies on admission, recruitment, support, and placement. All of the organizations sorted out above are research organizations and so should detail policies of equal opportunity for women educational researchers. Policy on the following should be stated: recruitment, hiring, anti-nepotism, placement, job classification, and assignment, promotion, salary and fringe benefits, conditions of work, leave, termination, and pregnancy, childbirth, and child care. All of these kinds of policy have been noted for colleges and

universities in the Higher Education Guidelines, Executive Order 11246, and pertain likewise to school districts, state departments, and research and development organizations as the Tittle, Saario, and Denker Study points out.

Fortunately, there is a base of affirmative action plans upon which one can build those for women in educational research. Government, particularly federal government, has played an active role in the institution of affirmative action plans. For example, under Executive Order 11246, the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare has forced, according to their guidelines, plan formation by universities and colleges falling within the Federal domain due to their Federal contracts or sub-contracts. State governments too have regulated such plans. And progressive organizations have instituted their own. Yet these plans are only a beginning in the institution of women's affirmative action plans with respect to educational research. The Tittle, Saario, and Denker Study attests to this. Some educational research organizations do not have plans and those that do have incomplete ones.

AERA cannot regulate; it is not a governmental agency. Nevertheless, it can demand adherence to its guidance. It can censor. Thus, AERA has a role to play in instituting women's affirmative action plans for the educational research training and/or research organization to which its members belong. It can set forth guidelines and evaluate adherence thereto. If adherence does not occur, it can formally censor. Again a firm hand of a full time women's affirmative action officer would be required.

FOOTNOTES

1. For a discussion of the nature of policy and affirmative action plans, see my paper, "Affirmative Action Plans: A Policy Analysis," presented to the Educational Policy Conference held at Indiana University, November 21-23, 1974.

2. As part of a 1972 AERA Symposium, Women as Equals, I presented a paper, "Prejudice Against Women and Bias in Educational Research".